



## Molana Rumi and Stormy Ocean of Sufism

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### ABSTRACT

*Theology, Philosophy, and Sufism are the main rational domains of Muslim thought. "Muslim Mysticism" is a pattern of life. An important aim of the "Muslim Mysticism" is how to be a perfect being. Jalal al-Din Rumi, the great Persian Sufi master and poet had the main important points of Sufism in his poetry. Drawing upon Rumi's writings of the thirteenth century, it can be understood that there is something beyond religion, and a hopeful domain of spirituality is clear in his poetry. We should climb a ladder of Sufism for understanding Rumi. This article attempts to discuss Sufism, origin of Sufism, and the message of Sufism which is hidden in Rumi's poetry.*

### KEYWORDS : Mysticism, Sufism, Rumi, Tawhid

#### Introduction

The mystery of God in the world is man. Man was created of clay, and God breathed life into him. God commanded all of the angels to prostrate themselves before him. The essence of man is Divine spirit. The body is the physical form which contains the Divine spark. Sufism helps man to be aware of his purpose of life, and that is to service to his Lord and Creator. The roots of Sufism are *Quran* and sayings of Prophet Mohammad. Awareness of God is the most important aim of Sufism. Sufism is a Muslim movement whose followers wanted to find divine truth and love through direct relation with God. As an ascetic movement, Sufism arose from within Islam in the 8th-9th centuries C.E. the name Sufi has been given to them, because they wore coarse wool garments as the rejection of worldly things. The religious practices of Sufism focused on strict self-control that its aim was to enable both psychological and mystical insights as well as a loss of self, which its ultimate goal was union with God.

Rumi was a practicing Muslim and a Sufi master. His poetry and lyrical verses show his desire for the Divine. Rumi is completely rooted in Islamic teaching of *Quran*, and in the Sufi Islamic tradition. Rumi is also perhaps the greatest mystical poet who ever lived, one of the greatest poets of the Persian language. He was able to express practically all aspects of the spiritual life in beautiful Persian poetry.

#### Sufism

"Sufism" is a translation of the Arabic word *Tasawwuf*, which first appeared in the nineteenth century. It is the bone or inner dimension of Islamic inspiration. "Sufism" is "Islamic Mysticism". In order to understand "Sufism", mysticism should be defined. Mysticism can be defined as "love of Absolute" (Schimmel 4). According to the dictionary of philosophy: "Mysticism, a doctrine or discipline maintaining that one can gain knowledge of reality that is not accessible to sense perception or to rational, conceptual thought" (Audi 515).

Intuition has been regarded as a source of knowledge for mysticism. Mysticism is a universal approach, which exists in all the human beings without any discrimination. It has different names in different religions. In Islam, it is known as Islamic or "Muslim Mysticism" or "Sufism". Generally associated with a religious tradition, mysticism can take a theistic form, as it has in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, or a non-theistic form, as it is in Buddhism, and some varieties of Hinduism" (515).

"Sufism" wants to declare that God is one, thus "Islamic Mysticism" is "the attempt to reach individual salvation through attaining *Tawhid*" (Schimmel 23). "Sufism" is the emanation of inward dimension of Islam. It is a way, which man empowered his soul. "Sufism" contains "its end or aim within itself in the sense that it can give access to direct knowledge of the eternal" (Burckhardt 3). Purity, purification of self, contentment, helping others, improving humankind, and love for all are the main aims of "Sufism".

"Sufism" provides deep spiritual lifetime. It means getting Absolute, and refers to *Ihsan* (the third basic religious attitude, which mentioned in *Quran*). It is described by the Sufis as "*Ihsan* is to adore Allah as though thou do see Him for even if thou do not see Him, He nonetheless sees thee" (Schimmel, 9). The Sufis lay most emphasis on *Ihsan*, because at this level a person is completely in the act of worshipping God.

In "Sufism", man can be described as a divine creature. The position of intellect in human is very important. Martin Lings in his book, *What Is Sufism* stated:

Sufism is nothing other than Islamic mysticism, which means that it is the central and most powerful current of that tidal wave which constitutes the Revelation of Islam; and it will be clear from what has just been said that to affirm this is in no sense a depreciation, as some appear to think. It is on the contrary an affirmation that Sufism is both authentic and effectual. (15-6)

*Tasawwuf* or with its general meaning *Irfan*, is an expression consists of religion and philosophy. Some scholars mentioned that "Sufism" or *Tasawwuf* is different from *Irfan*. It can be mentioned, *Tasawwuf* is practical, and social appearance of Islam. The goal and fruit of *Irfan* has been mentioned by Prophet's saying "He who knows [*arafa*] himself knows his Lord" (Chittick, *Sufism* 39). If we imagine a tree, religion will be the root, and mysticism will be a fruit of that tree. In other words, mysticism is the seed of the belief. Nasr states: "Moreover, Islamic Mysticism under stood in this sense is primarily a path of knowledge (*al-marifah*, *Irfan*) to which the element of love is attached in accordance with the structure of the Islamic revelation..." (Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy* 367).

The basis of "Sufism" is *Tawhid*. *Tawhid* means absolute Divine Unity: *La illah illa Allah* (there is no god but God). A Sufi wants to get the real meaning of unity, and that is a reality which can save a man from the world of intensity. William. C. Chittick stated:

The first Shahadah – "There is no god but God" – discerns between the Real and the unreal, or between the Absolute and the relative, or between God and "everything other than God," which is the universe. Traditionally the Shahadah is said to be divided into two halves, the negation ("no god") and the affirmation ("but God"). The first half denies the inherent reality of the world and the self. The second half affirms the ultimacy of the divine reality. The Shahadah means that there is "no creator but God," "none merciful but God," "none knowing but God." (Sufism 15)

The aim of a Sufi is to get the deeper interpretation of *Quran*. In Sufi's view, life is like an ocean, and a person should be an expert swimmer, that can reach the final destination of this ocean, which is God. They want to guide the wandering soul, and back to perfect union with God.

### Origin of the word Sufi and Sufism

There are different ideas about the origin of the words; "Sufi" and "Sufism". According to some scholars, the Sufi's (mystics) were the men of piety. In Arabic, there is a word 'Safa' means purity. So, the word, Sufi (a man of purity and piety) was derived from this Arabic word. Some writers are of opinion that Sufis used to do their prayers in the first *Saff*(row), so it was derived from the Arabic word 'saff' (row). According to another approach, its origin is *Suffa*. In Arabic, *Suffa* means a terrace or a plate form. At the time of Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) in Madina, there was a terrace in the 'Masjad e Nabavi' and a group of companions sitting on it was permanently involved in religious ceremonies. Sufis engaged permanently and constantly in religious rites, so the word Sufi was used for them. But the most accepted one by Sufis and Sufi scholars is that "the term is derived from *Suf*, which means wool" (Nasr, *Garden of Truth* 171). Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr is of opinion:

"What is the origin of the word mysticism? One should know the meanings of mysticism in Islamic context. One must recall that silence or the closing of one's lips is the root meaning of the Greek verb *mue-* from which the word *mysterion* and mysticism derive. As such, one might relate it in the Islamic context to such terms as *asrar* (mysteries) or *batin* (the inward or esoteric), remembering that the Sufis refer often to themselves as the people who are the Divine Mysteries or *asrar*". (Islamic Philosophy 367)

### Molana Rumi and Sufism

Jalal al-Din Rumi was a Persian Sufi, and was born in Balkh. He is one of the greatest of Sufi poets. Rumi is also a philosopher. The most important work of Rumi is his massive *Mathnawi*. He taught the most important aim of Sufi doctrine in his idea was to extricate oneself from human thoughts and wishes, human needs, and the outward impressions of the senses, and as the result, man may become a pure mirror for the God. The main core of Rumi's thought is essentially that of the concept of *Tawhid*. God is considered by him as the goal of all existence. In his idea, religion was only a personal experience, and was not included to logical arguments or perceptions of the senses.

As the Sufi poet of the Persian language, he dominated the whole eastern lands of Islam. He was taken as a spiritual pole not only for the Persian people to whom he belongs, but also for the whole world where his messages remain superior. Sufism can be considered like a mountain, and Rumi stood at the summit of this mountain. In the Sufi tradition, he was a flower who stood at the middle of garden of Sufism, and always he was in full bloom. He lived during a century which was witness for producing so many saints throughout the

Islamic world from Ibn Arabi from Andalusia, to Najm al-Din Kubra from Samarqand. Rumi came at the end of this period, and in fact the spiritual history of the Islamic peoples has been culminated by him. William.C.Chittick stated:

Following in his father's footsteps, Mawlana became attracted to Sufism early in life and became the disciple of a number of spiritual masters. Perhaps the most important occurrence in his spiritual life was his meeting at the age of thirty-seven with a wandering Sufi named Shams al-Din of Tabriz. (*Sufi Doctrine of Rumi* 3)

Rumi accustomed both in Sufism and in other Islamic sciences. He was deeply dipped in the Quranic sciences. His major role was in Islamic philosophy and *Tasawwuf*. It is clear in his poetry, especially through his famous *Mathnawi*. A deep study of his works reveals that his *Mathnawi* is a commentary upon the *Quran*, and has been called "the *Quran* in the Persian language". The various hidden aspects of Sufism have been highlighted by Sufism. The relationship between man and God and between man and man are his main concerns. His *Diwanis* like a great tree full of blossom, and those blossoms came from the vast ocean of Quranic sciences. According to Chittick:

While the *Mathnawi* tends towards a didactic approach, the *Diwanis* rather a collection of ecstatic utterances. It is well known that most of the *ghazals* (or "lyric poems of love") of the *Diwan* were composed spontaneously by Mawlana during the *samd'* or "mystical dance." (5)

Rumi was extremely belonged to the Sufi tradition, both through formal and external contact with earlier Sufi writings, and as a result, the wavy ocean of Sufism started to move in his soul. He found the Sufi tradition inherent within himself.

### Conclusion

"Muslim Mysticism" is considered as a way of life also. For a Muslim mystic God, the absolute beauty, and the development of perfect being are the aim of life. The perfect man is the future and hope of humankind. Rumi is among the greatest Muslim saints and mystics. He has also been considered by Western scholars "as the greatest mystical poet of all time". Rumi memorized much or all of the Holy Qur'an when he was young, because the *Mathnawi* and his other poetry are filled with direct quotes in Arabic, Persian paraphrases, and references to Quranic verses. Rumi was both a great Sufi and great poet. Through his poetry Rumi is able to give a wonderful glimpse of the "Sufism".

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